

# REVISED News Release

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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**First of Yuma drug ring defendants to go to trial is convicted on all charges including four as "serious drug offender"**

## **Attorney General's Office wins major conviction on 17-count drug case**

(Phoenix, AZ—July 17, 2003) Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard today called the conviction late yesterday of a Yuma man on drug-related charges "a major victory for law enforcement."

Noel Haro had been indicted on 17 counts in January of 2002, including selling or transferring cocaine and marijuana and money laundering. A jury in the Superior Court in Maricopa County yesterday found him guilty of all 17 counts. Because the jury found Haro to be a "serious drug offender" in four of the counts, he could receive a maximum penalty of 260 years in prison.

Haro, 28, was one of 50 individuals indicted after a three-year investigation into a major drug ring in the Yuma area and the first one to be tried. Of the other 49 individuals named in the original indictment, two were dismissed, ten are awaiting trial, 36 pled guilty and one is still a fugitive.

"This is a terrific win for the people of Arizona," said General Goddard. "Through the thorough work of our attorneys and the representatives of the other participating agencies, the flow of drugs to our streets and our kids has been slowed."

Billie Rosen prosecuted the case for the Arizona Attorney General's Office. "This not only sends a serious criminal to prison for a long time," she said after yesterday's sweeping convictions, "but also sends a message to others that drug crimes will be vigorously prosecuted; that perpetrators will be severely punished." Assistant Attorney General Kristen Hoffmeyer helped prosecute the case.

The investigation began in this case in April of 1999 and involved cooperation among federal, state and local entities.

"Certainly the high level of collaboration among the Attorney General's Office, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the United States Customs Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Southwest Border Alliance, the U.S. Border Patrol, the Yuma County Attorney's Office, Yuma County Sheriff's Department and Arizona Child Protective Services was a factor in putting together such an overwhelmingly strong case," said Rosen.

Haro had a separate indictment last November on 31 counts, including conspiring to kill witnesses and to deal drugs from his jail cell. Apparently, Haro continued to write threatening letters to witnesses even during his trial. "Arizona is going to be a safer place with this guy out of circulation," added Rosen.

Sentencing has been set for August 22, but may be delayed.

Among those working on the case was DEA's Angeline Woolbright who was called to active military duty last March. She was pulled off active duty as a military intelligence officer for the four-week trial and is scheduled to go back to active duty on Sunday.

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